

***Sympetrum* dragonflies (Odonata: Libellulidae) in Great Yarmouth – a migration?**

A visit to the Great Yarmouth (Norfolk) main cemetery on 5 August 1995 confirmed the presence of the rarest of British dragonflies, the vagrant darter *Sympetrum vulgatum* (Linnaeus), first noted on 1 August by Peter Milford. This dragonfly is best identified face on, where the black “handlebar” moustache across the top of the frons continues down along the inner margins of the eyes. This feature can still be very difficult to see clearly as it is usually obscured by the eyes, and it is widely accepted that individuals need to be trapped for verification. However, in my opinion this feature can be seen in the field given close patient study and surreptitious stalking of the insect with close-focusing binoculars. It is slightly smaller than the common darter, *S. striolatum* (Charpentier), being slightly constricted in the middle of the abdomen, and the yellow areas on the thorax are suffused with red (olive on the female).

With previously recorded numbers extremely low, only eight according Hammond (1983, *The dragonflies of Great Britain and Ireland*), it has perhaps been overlooked due to its similarity to *S. striolatum*.

A male and female were observed keeping excellent company with numerous yellow-winged darters, *S. flaveolum* (Linnaeus), another infrequent immigrant, with only three records in the 1980s (*Norfolk Dragonfly Survey*, 1989).

S. flaveolum has spread widely inland since its arrival all along the east coast (some 200 individuals), with sightings in the first week of August from Bedfordshire (Willington, Stuart Pittman, Mike Watson and Steve Cham), Hertfordshire (Ickleford/Hitchin, Mike Watson) and Tring Reservoirs (Rare Bird Alert), Leicestershire (Rare Bird Alert), and Alvecote Pools Warwickshire/Staffordshire borders (Brian Mitchell) moving swiftly onto the west coast at Kenfig, South Wales and Heysham, Lancashire.

The black darter, *S. danae* (Sulzer), a species very rare in Norfolk due to its preference for acid bogs was also in the churchyard, undoubtedly migrant. Added to this, the almost ubiquitous ruddy darter, *S. sanguineum* (Müller) was also present, but had not been seen there until as recently as 1993. The large numbers may suggest immigration as postulated in Mendel (1992, *Suffolk Dragonflies*).—STUART PITTMAN, 101 Old Hale Way, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1XR.

***Catocala fraxini* (Lep.: Noctuidae) in Northumberland, VC68**

I have received from Andy Baxter, Chief Warden of the Farne Islands an interesting record of the Clifden Nonpareil *Catocala fraxini* noted on Inner Farne on 3.ix.1995. Although recorded in the past from Northumberland, it is uncommon for such an irregular immigrant to be noted on a relatively bleak offshore island.—R.H.L. DENNIS, 4 Fairfax Drive, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 6EY.